



# Buzzwords ...

Postage Paid  
Wellington  
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Return address:  
Box 4048  
Wellington

ISSN 0114 -0795

..... the newsletter for National Beekeepers' Association members

**Conference Special Issue...**

**Buzzwords No 55 August 1993**

- \* **NEW NBA PRESIDENT ELECTED**
- \* **OUR FRIEND IN PARLIAMENT**
- \* **NEW 1080 BAIT ANNOUNCED**
- \* **MARKETING PLAN UNDER WAY**



## **"New Safety Regulations for Honey Workers"**



### **A WARM TIME IN GORE**

This year's highly successful Gore conference proved once again how dangerous it is to listen to "nay-sayers". For starters, despite numerous predictions to the contrary, the conference in the deep south was very well supported. The seminar attendance in particular was virtually identical to last year's in Hastings.

The weather in Southland also turned out much better than predicted - cold at night, to be sure, but dry and mostly sunny every day. No one could say they didn't provide sufficient heat at the conference venue, either. In Southland, when they say central heating, they mean you can even open up all the windows and doors.

And as all conference participants can attest, the warmth of the venue was matched by the warmth of all the Southlanders they met - the conference organisers, the Croydon Lodge staff, and even just the people on the street. As one astonished North Islander exclaimed, "they stop for you at the cross walks and they even smile at you as they wait!"

Congratulations must surely go to all Southland branch members who worked so hard to ensure that the conference was a success. Special thanks to Don Steadman, Southland branch president, who met everyone at the airport, and seemed to have everything under control right straight through; to Frances Trewby, who organised a very valuable seminar; and to Ian Spence, Keith Herron, Michael and Kerry Lee, and Ross Ward, who all played prominent roles throughout the week. Thanks for such a good (and warm) time!

## CHANGING OF THE GUARD

This year's conference saw the retirement of Dudley Ward (Dannevirke), your NBA president for the past three years, and the replacement of a further two members of the executive - Nick Wallingford (Tauranga), and Michael Wraight (Nelson). Conference delegates praised all three for the hard work and keen interest they have shown in industry affairs over the years, and identified the particular qualities each brought to the difficult task of running the association.

Dudley Ward was singled out for the "strong conciliatory approach" he brought to the office of president and his ability to accomplish so much as a "team manager". Nick Wallingford was acknowledged for his incisiveness, particularly in making government submissions, and for his computing and budgetary skills. Michael Wraight earned the thanks of his fellow executive members for his ability to "cut through all the jargon in proposed legislation" facing the industry. Michael and Nick were heavily involved in submissions to government on both the Bio-Security Bill and the Australian honey import protocols.

New members of the executive, who took up their positions at the executive meeting at the end of conference, are Graham Cammell (Auckland), Russell Berry (Rotorua), and Mervin Cloake (Timaru).

## AN APPROPRIATE CHOICE FOR PRESIDENT

It is perhaps fitting in this centenary year of woman's suffrage in New Zealand that delegates elected Frances Trewby (Nelson) as their new president to lead the NBA. Frances was previously vice-president of the association. It was also pointed out that the appointment was doubly appropriate, since the first beekeeper in New Zealand was in fact a woman.

Just as important for many readers of *Buzzwords*, however, is the fact that Frances is the first beekeeper employee to ever become the leader of our industry. The appointment recognises the important part workers, as well as owners, play in beekeeping and also acknowledges the range of skills and experiences of industry members. The variety of people involved in our industry is one of its great strengths, and in the past has been one of the main reasons that beekeeping has been so progressive and influential in New Zealand.

Delegates elected Richard Benseman (Ashburton) as the association's new vice-president.

## QUALITY, QUALITY, QUALITY

As Bill Floyd points out in his article later on in this issue, the essence of at least the seminar-part of this year's conference could be summed up in the word "Quality" - quality, because its good for your business; quality, because the business of

the on-seller of your products (domestic and export) may depend on it; quality, because you may not even be able to extract your honey in the future without it.

Speakers on the subject included Steve Olds, from Tecpak Industries in Dunedin, a major supplier of packaging to our industry; Denise Riches, a quality systems consultant from Peat-Marwick; Sally Gilbert, a Health Protection Officer with Southern Health; and Bryan Clements, from Kihikihi, a honey packer who is currently developing quality systems for his business. The selection of speakers was excellent, and a variety of approaches and opinions were presented.

For Steve Olds, the need to concentrate on quality in his business was based on the fact that unless they kept improving their products in the market place, competitors would soon step up and fill in the gaps. He now believes that unless all of us adopt quality systems in the future, our businesses will surely disappear. But Steve was quick to point out that Total Quality Management was not a panacea; it can't solve all the problems in a business.



*"Ted, they appear a little restless this morning, don't you think?"*

*(Cartoon by Jon F)*

At Tecpak they soon realised that senior staff had to learn basic management skills and engage in serious business planning if their commitment to quality was to succeed. Part of that management training took the form of new ways of handling workers, the most important part of any business, according to Steve. The main change they have made at Tecpak is to ensure that barriers are removed which rob their workers of their pride of workmanship.

Denise Riches provides quality management consultancy services to a range of businesses throughout the South Island. She believes the drive in the future for quality systems in New Zealand business will be the requirement for quality assurance by purchasers. For exporters, this is already fast becoming the case. New Zealand firms are finding that to remain competitive internationally, quality accreditation is essential.

The change is also now being reflected on the domestic market. Food retailers, especially, are beginning to establish formalised accreditation of suppliers. Provided the supplier



can meet recognised standards of product quality and deliver on time, they become the favoured suppliers of goods. Quality systems are therefore finding their way out of the factory and all the way down to the primary producer. Denise currently has several dairy farmer clients developing quality systems.

The information Sally Gilbert presented was no doubt a shock to some people in the room. Sally outlined the provisions of the draft Food Safety Regulations now before Parliament (release date so far unknown). When the regulations are enacted they will replace the current Food Hygiene Regulations, 1974, the legislation under which honey houses are currently licensed. According to Sally, the old legislation, which concentrated on how the premises should be constructed, turned out to be less than satisfactory. Many people complained about the rigidity of the requirements (remember sloping window sills!), while at the same time the rules completely missed out on assessing the actual processes which took place in the premises.

The new legislation will be quite the reverse; it will concentrate on the food safety systems in the premises and will give back to the owner the responsibility for ensuring that the structures and machines are suitable for producing a safe product. In effect, honey houses (and all other food processing places) will not be registered; the premises's food safety programme will be registered instead.

Owners of honey houses will have to write a simple food safety document which outlines these food safety quality systems, including hazard analysis, sampling/testing, monitoring, and what would be done to rectify problems which might occur. According to Sally, coming up with such a system should be quite easy for beekeepers because our product is pure, unprocessed, and incapable of harbouring disease-bearing organisms found in most other foods.

Bryan Clements outlined the process his business (Waikato Honey Products) is taking to achieve ISO 9002 quality accreditation. Bryan received a Business Development Board grant which pays for half of the expenses for quality management training and half the expenses of the accreditation audit.

Bryan has employed a MAF Quality Management consultant to help and just recently had his first audit by Telarc, a New Zealand quality accreditation firm. While at times nerve-racking, Bryan is sure the system will pay dividends in the future. His message to the seminar was a simple "if I can do it, so can you!"

## HEARD AT CONFERENCE

"If you're interested in remaining in business in the future, you'll soon learn the meaning of the word 'quality'"  
- Steve Olds

"How can you have quality honey if your system for processing it isn't quality" - Steve Olds

"Ladies and Gentlemen, good morning, it's now gone

afternoon." - Keith Herron

"If you are asking for what you were intending to ask for, I'd still speak against it."

"The two shareholders are the Minister of Science, and Ruth Richardson, the minister of everything."

"If you are not prepared as a government to pay for an EDPR for EFB, then don't allow Australian honey into this country." - Keith Herron

## 1080, WASPS, AND AFB

A normal feature of any annual conference are the scientific reports, and this year speakers took the opportunity to announce several breakthroughs in areas of concern to beekeepers. The main speaker was Dr. Oliver Sutherland, general manager with the Weeds and Pests Division, Manaaki Whenua Landcare Research, one of the new Crown Research Institutes. Landcare Research was given the job of finding and testing a new bee repellent for 1080 following the controversial ending of work on oxalic acid (see *Buzzwords* 54). Landcare Research contracted Dr. Mark Goodwin, the discoverer of the original oxalic acid repellent, to test a range of other substances for bee repellency. Mark came up with another candidate, called isovaleric acid (IVA), a common substance found in some food products. The substance has also now been tested by Landcare Research on possums in cages, and seems to have no repellent effect on the possums at all. Landcare Research is now in the process of setting up field trials on the repellent.

Dr. Sutherland assured the audience that this time the trials will be conducted in a proper scientific manner and that only Landcare Research personnel will be involved. Dr. Sutherland said that work was also under way to develop an alternative to 1080 which would kill possums, but would be safe to a range of other organisms (including insects). The new product would also incorporate a bee repellent to ensure that bees did not bring the material back to their hives. According to Dr. Sutherland, "our hope is that in a very short time we will have an alternative."

Dr. Sutherland also outlined current work being conducted by Landcare Research on wasps. With the restructuring of science a little over a year ago, wasp researchers from a number of government departments were brought together to work as a team in Landcare Research. The group immediately set about evaluating the current control approach, which uses a parasitic wasp as a biological control. Clearly, the establishment of the wasp hadn't been successful, even though a second establishment site had recently been found in Canterbury.

After computer modelling of the parasite populations, the group came to the conclusion that even though this had been the most widely distributed biological control release in New Zealand history, it will never reach the levels necessary to fully control either the German or common wasp. Since the biological control effort using the first





parasite had been driven by outside funding (especially from regional councils) and that funding had now dried up, the group decided to focus its control efforts instead on new biological control agents and on chemical controls.

Dr. Sutherland was able to announce at the conference that a new substance, sulphfluramid, which is an excellent wasp poison, will soon be manufactured in a bait formulation, and should be available to the public next summer.

And we couldn't let a conference go by without some more stunning results on AFB, and Dr. Mark Goodwin certainly didn't let us down. This last season Mark and his team at Ruakura set up a trial to test the disease-spreading risk of wet (freshly extracted) supers. Forty hives, all testing negative for AFB spores using the adult bee test, were divided into two groups. One group received extracted supers which had originally come from hives with visual symptoms of AFB; the other group acted as a control.

The supers were placed on the colonies in the late spring and no robbing was observed between any of the colonies. Nevertheless, when adult bees were sampled 2 days later, all colonies (including the controls) tested positive for AFB spores. According to Mark, robbing obviously had occurred, but not in a way that was normally evident.

The hives were then completely inspected for diseased larvae, but on the first round nothing was found. One month later, however, 1 hive was found to be infected with AFB (from the wets group), and further infected hives were found throughout the next five months. To date, a total of 8 wet-super colonies (40% of sample) have broken down. But more surprisingly, 4 of the control colonies have developed visual symptoms as well.

According to Mark, wet supers would appear to be a very important factor in the spread of AFB. He believes it is therefore essential that all colonies are inspected before any honey is taken off. Such inspections are all the more important, he believes, because if AFB-infected supers end up on new colonies in the spring, the long-term development of obvious disease symptoms may mean that the beekeeper will still be reaping the consequences 12 months later.

## A FRIEND IN PARLIAMENT

For the second year running, Denis Marshall, the associate Minister of Agriculture, was unable to address conference (see *Buzzwords* 44). Last year it was an ear infection, and this year he was called away at the last minute to handle urgent legislation before the House. In his place we were instead addressed by a "breath of fresh air" in the form of Margaret Moir, MP for West Coast, and member of both the Agriculture Caucus Committee and the Primary Production Select Committee. Delegates knew they were in for a "different approach" when she began her address by saying, "I've changed some of the words in this because of the bureaucratic jargon; I never know what they mean."

Her prepared notes covered all the various current government actions affecting our industry, including the

Cor. ... Levy Act Amendment Bill (the government's going to make the voting system more workable), the Bio-Security Bill (due back before the House in two weeks), and the Australian Honey Protocols (a new protocol is likely at the end of this year, with submissions called for in January-February). It was on this last subject that most of the real discussion took place. Putting away the notes (which she said she disagreed with, anyway), Mrs. Moir told us that she "didn't think we should import any Australian honey at all." To her it was "ludicrous" that the government was even considering it, while at the same time trying to improve bio-security.

Mrs. Moir made the point quite strongly that our industry needed to continue the lobbying effort on the issue, making sure that every MP knew what affect any likely import would have. She said that the way to do this lobbying was by a personal visit, rather than by mail. Each MP gets approximately 12 inches worth of mail per week, so the personal approach is vital.

Mrs. Moir also believes that our industry is in a key position to get other industries to help us win the fight on Australia honey and also on EDPR. "The government is prepared to share the expense on things like foot and mouth because it threatens our future", she said. "You will need to persuade the government that for a bee disease it will also be a threat to our New Zealand future."

During question time, members of the executive who had made the original submission to the Ag Caucus Committee on Australian honey let the audience know just how important Mrs. Moir was to the cause. According to Frances Trewby, Mrs. Moir was the one who "knew the questions to ask to get the answers we wanted to tell her." And Mrs. Moir responded by telling the audience that our campaign had indeed been effective. "You have obviously made the Minister pause, because he was keen to have Australian honey in New Zealand last year", she said. The important thing now, according to Mrs. Moir, was to keep up the fight, and be ready with sound, well-constructed arguments when the next protocol is proposed. Needless to say, by the end of Mrs. Moir's session, conference was left in no doubt that there would be at least one strong beekeeping supporter in the Beehive next time around.

## TOWARDS AN AFB-FREE FUTURE

Conference was also presented with the long-awaited report of the Disease Control Committee, chaired by Ian Berry (Havelock North), a past president of the association. The committee was made up of 7 prominent beekeepers from throughout the country, and included people with a range of different opinions on disease control. The committee carried out most of its affairs via conference call, and achieved its objective at below its \$2500 budget.

It's probably common knowledge by now that the committee recommended an industry goal of AFB eradication in New Zealand by the year 2000. Ian Berry defended this goal by pointing out that:



- a) the goal was the same as the one held by most good beekeepers for their own outfits,
- b) eradication would be the most economic approach to the problem in the long-run,
- c) the goal would signal to government the beekeeping industry's strong commitment to disease control (especially in relation to honey imports), and
- d) even if the goal wasn't met, the worst that could happen would be to achieve a better level of disease control than we already have.

Ian said the committee felt that the alternative would be to continue to find diseased hives at slower rate than new hives were infected, with the result that the industry would finally have to adopt drug feeding to survive.

The committee report calls for an increased educational component to the current disease control programme, so that every beekeeper will be able to recognise AFB, inspect their hives, deal effectively with outbreaks, and report disease to authorities. They suggest the production of a "Starting with Bees" pamphlet at the national level, for distribution to all new beekeepers, and an AFB control manual, for the use of commercial beekeepers. Branches would also play a bigger part in the programme, and the committee suggests a change to the NBA rules to ensure that every branch carries out an annual AFB education meeting.

The committee also recommends that the way be cleared for striking a levy under the Commodity Levies Act, once the Hive Levy Act is repealed in 1995. The committee suggests that the levy be on an apiary basis and be charged to all beekeepers owning 4 apiaries or more. They also recommend a change to June 1 for levy payments and a corresponding change to June 1 for disease declarations to MAF.

The committee report now has to be considered by the full executive. Conference gave its support for the recommendations by passing the various related remits. In the next year it will be up to the NBA, and MAF (as the current AFB programme contractor), to implement any of the recommendations the executive decides to adopt.

## "THE TREE IS JUST PLANTED, DON'T PULL IT UP"

The Honey Industry Marketing Plan was also tabled at conference, with a talk outlining the plan by Marketing Committee chairman Alan McCaw, and a presentation on marketing initiatives by Bill Floyd. Bill presents more detail in his article below.

Following the presentations, discussion took place on remit 17, which proposes the continuation of the marketing level for the next financial year. Debate centred on the need to show financial commitment to the plan in order for it to have a chance to succeed. Several delegates expressed their

personal reservations about the levy, but there seemed to be common agreement that the levy must proceed, at least for another year. As Mervin Cloake (Timaru) said, "if we pull the pin on it now, we've done the money cold."

Questions were also asked of executive regarding the non-payment of hive levies. Many members had felt that the imposition of the marketing levy would drive beekeepers underground, or result in a large number of undeclared hives. It turns out, however, that hive levy payments are currently within 1% of last financial year, and that substantially more hives have been declared than were budgeted for (executive budgeted for a downturn). There is still, however, an outstanding debt on hive levies of \$35,000 (out of a total of about \$230,000) and steps are being taken to initiate legal action against larger non-payers.



*The Marketing Plan  
needs to be driven*

(Cartoon by Jon Fear)

## ALSO HEARD AT CONFERENCE

"If you establish a bee site, you don't decide to move it after only one year. You give it three or four years, taking into account the vagaries of weather, etc., before you make your evaluation." - Findlay Abernethy

"When politicians read this order paper and see our commitment to AFB eradication, they'll see how seriously this industry is about its bio-security." - John Dobson

"We don't need to discuss this remit, but I guess that's what I'm doing, so it looks like I will." - Alan McCaw

"Is there anyone who wants to suggest an amendment to this motion? No, I would suggest we just let the mess stand, as it is, for the record!"

"There are 389 ordinary (non-levy paying) members in this organisation who feel that they are already contributing enough. Hobbyists are a great asset to our industry and one of its strengths. They're not just in the association for the magazine. They're in it to help contribute to the society we all live in." - Colin McLean



#### HONEY INDUSTRY TRUST FUND

Applications for funding close on 15 August and 15 February. Forms available from PO Box 4048, Wgtn.

"I think there's a statement in there somewhere about small groundnuts and lesser primates." - Peter Bray

Re. controls on the function of executive - "If we own a dog, we don't have to bark as well." - Dale Gifford

"We've really enjoyed the deep south. The weather's been dry, and so has the humour."

"You're the only vice-president I've had that I've been able to give a kiss." - Dudley Ward to Frances Trewby

## NOTES FROM THE MARKETING COMMITTEE

The Honey Industry's Marketing Plan now moves into full swing as a result of the support of delegates at this year's conference. Although the marketing levy which resulted from last year's conference provided funds for the coming (1993/94) year, it was necessary for the Marketing Committee to get confirmation of ongoing funding for 1994/95 before it could make final decisions on its strategies and priorities.

If the essence of the 1993 Conference could be summed up in a few words (apart from the obvious consensus that "line-dancing is a great toe-tapper"), it would have to be that "it's time to toe the line on quality". The Marketing Committee had identified "Quality Systems" and "Product Integrity" as being vital to creating a sound foundation for all marketing promotional activities.

Some packers are producing international-class products; others (while perhaps not realising it) are doing everything as if their sole objective was to reduce the return to beekeepers and themselves and to keep honey perceived as a lacklustre, mediocre product.

The Honey Marketing Plan specifically addresses these "Quality" issues, and the first priority on the Marketing Funds is to carry out the following strategies:

- Develop a set of standards and industry specifications to become known as the New Zealand Honey Quality Standards (NZHQS)
- Make these standards available to the beekeeping industry
- Develop a "Honey mark" that can be used on honey packaging that has been produced to these NZHQS specifications
- Create opportunities for the beekeepers and packers who use the NZHQS

The NZHQS and the Honey mark "Quality" symbol will create a foundation for the future successes of the New Zealand beekeeping industry and are the cornerstone of the Marketing Committee's own actions over the next three to five years.

This year's conference was also used to release the broad details of a New Zealand Honey Food Technology Service. This service will provide New Zealand food manufacturers with opportunities to include honey in their own products. The service will follow the already successful format developed in the US.

The Marketing Committee has been given permission by the US honey industry to use all their research and promotional material at no charge in return for keeping them in touch with what we achieve here in New Zealand.

The move into developing honey as a food ingredient once again puts the emphasis on the need for a national industry "Quality" standard. The intention is to develop product concepts directly with food manufacturers, and once we have their interest, provide them with a list of the beekeepers/packers who are meeting the NZHQS requirements. Those beekeepers will then be able to tender for supplying the honey for the project.

The Marketing Committee also has a number of strategies aimed at increasing the profile of honey per se in New Zealand. However, our first priority is the development of the NZHQS.

*Bill Floyd, Honey Marketing Committee*

## FROM THE BRANCHES

The next meeting of the **Auckland** branch is scheduled for Thursday, August 5, beginning at 7:30 pm, at the Papakura Anglican Church Hall. Discussion topic for the meeting will be "feeding bees".

The next meeting of the **Waikato** branch will be held on Friday, August 6, beginning at 10 am, at the Green Room, Homestead, Ruakura.



## BUZZWORDS IS ...

Published by the National Beekeepers' Association of New Zealand, PO Box 4048, Wellington. Production by Cliff Van Eaton and Nick Wallingford.

Articles and feedback to *Buzzwords*, c/- MAF, Private Bag, Tauranga. Fax (07) 578 8429, phone (07) 578 2069. Deadline for copy is the 20th of each month.

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